

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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P R 270925Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3360

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0324

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MILI AO

SUBJECT: VIOLENCE CONTINUES: MPLA AND FNLA BANNED FROM THE STREETS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

REF: LUANDA 323 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. GENERALIZED VIOLENCE ENSUED IN MANY AREAS OF LUANDA MARCH 26. GRENADES, MORTARS AND BAZOOKAS WERE BROUGHT INTO PLAY AND SCORES OF DEATHS HAVE BEEN REPORTED AMONGH BOTH COMBATANTS AND BYSTANDERS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS IMPOSED A CURFEW AND BANNED ALL FNLA AND MPLA TROOPS FROM THE STREETS. END SUMMARY.

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2. DURING THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 26 THE TEMPO OF THE FIGHTING

PICKED UP IN THE BLACK SLUMS GIRDING LUANDA. MPLA AND FNLA FORCES CONFRONTED ONE ANOTHER WITH THE LARGEST WEAPONS AT THEIR DISPOSAL - MORTARS AND ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADES (RPG'S) - AS WELL AS HEAVY MACHINE GUNS AND THE USUAL LIGHT AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE ANY PARTICULAR TACTICAL OBJECTIVES BEHIND THE ATTACKS OF EITHER GROUPS OTHER THAN TO TRY AND WIPE OUT THE OPPOSITION. THE FIGHTING WAS CONFINED TO THE SLUMS AND SURROUNDING AREAS ALTHOUGH SEVERAL GRENADES WERE THROWN IN THE BUSINESS DISTRICT DURING THE DAY.

3. SO FAR ONLY FNLA AND MPLA ARE INVOLVED, WITH UNITA UNWILLING TO EMBROIL ITSELF IN THIS CLASH, EVEN THOUGH UNITA HAS A FEW OLD ACCOUNTS TO SQUARE WITH MPLA. UNITA'S STRENGTH IN LUANDA IS NOT SIGNIFICANT WHEN COMPARED TO THE OTHER TWO. MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, IS UNITA'S STRATEGY OF ENHANCING ITS LAW AND ORDER IMAGE AS THE OTHER TWO GROUPS SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER.

4. SOME REPORTS INDICATE THAT FNLA MADE A CONCERTED ATTACK ON MPLA OFFICES AND SOUGHT OPPORTUNITIES TO AVENGE FNLA LOSSES EARLIER IN THE WEEK. WE HAVE A NUMBER OF UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF FNLA ATROCITIES AGAINST CIVILIANS IN THE GHETTOES AND OF FNLA LEVELLING MPLA OFFICES. ANOTHER REPORT TALKS OF A BAZOOKA BLAST AT AN ARMY TRUCK THAT KILLED ALL ABOARD - SEVEN PORTUGUESE SOLDIERS AND FOUR UNITA TROOPS. THE HOSPITALS HAVE RECEIVED MANY DEAD AND WOUNDED, BUT WE HAVE SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO GET AN ACCURATE BODY COUNT. A NUMBER OF GRENADES WERE LAUNCHED AT OR THROWN INTO GHETTO HUTS AND A NUMBER OF CIVILIANS WERE KILLED AND MUTILATED. ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT MPLA IRREGULARS IN THE GHETTOES AS WELL AS HOODLUMS AND THRILL SEEKERS, RESPONDED INDISCRIMINATELY TO THE FNLA ATTACKS.

5. THE EVENING OF MARCH 26 THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCED A CURFEW FROM NINE P.M. TO SIX A.M. UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. DURING THE DAY MILITARY PATROLS WILL CONSIST OF PORTUGUESE AND UNITA TROOPS. AT NIGHT PORTUGUESE TROOPS WILL PATROL ALONE. FNLA AND MPLA TROOPS HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO REMAIN IN THEIR QUARTERS AT ALL TIMES.

5. THE NIGHT OF MARCH 26 WAS CALM ALTHOUGH SCATTERED SHOTS AND EXPLOSIONS WERE HEARD. THE MORNING OF MARCH 27 BROUGHT THE FIRST

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HEAVY RAIN IN A YEAR AND THE COMBINATION OF FEAR, WEATHER AND THE PROXIMITY OF THE EASTER HOLIDAYS KEPT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME.

6. WE WILL REPORT AGAIN AS SOON AS WE HAVE CASUALTY FIGURES.
KILLORAN

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